

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000964

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP, OES/ENV JGOURLEY AND JTHOMPSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [AORC](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND RESPONSE TO REQUEST ON NEGOTIATIONS
UNDER GLOBAL AGREEMENT TO PROTECT OZONE LAYER

REF: STATE 245175

11. (SBU) Post provided reftel points to Emma Kerslake, Environment Division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT.) MFAT noted that they would respond following consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF.) AgAttache spoke separately with MAF Biosecurity officers Peter Johnston and Ken Glassey, who pointed out that the MBTOC has recommended a reduction in New Zealand's 2006 Critical Use Exemption (CUE) request. New Zealand is not likely to press at the meeting for its higher requested volume for Methyl Bromide (MB) usage.

Methyl Bromide in New Zealand

12. (U) MAF officials emphasized that the Montreal Protocol's restrictions on the utilization of MB impact only on unofficial uses and do not apply to official control or quarantine usage. In New Zealand approximately 70 percent of all MB application is for quarantine control, with most applied to forestry exports and produce. Only about 30 percent of usage is "unofficial," and would be governed by the Montreal Protocol's restrictions.

13. (SBU) The most important use of unofficial MB is on strawberry fields. In studying the issue, MAF found that some applications, particularly to virgin fields not previously producing strawberries, was unnecessary - it was being applied as a weed control system versus a pathogen control system. Reduction of this unnecessary application should allow the GoNZ to meet the lower 2006 usage level being recommended by MBTOC. However, should those harvested strawberries be treated with MB as a quarantine measure prior to export, this application would be official, and fall outside the purview of the Montreal Protocol.

Concern over "Official Use" Impact

14. (SBU) Comment: Largely due to the GoNZ's ability to live with its lowered target, the U.S. should not count on strong support from New Zealand. On a related front, an Auckland study released November 2 found that 4,872 residential properties may be located on premises previously used for horticulture, and the soil may still contain contaminants. While contamination concerns are varied, they include chemical applications for both pests and weeds, including methyl bromide. The findings have resulted in increased pressure on the GoNZ to test all the named sites and develop a national process for identifying and testing potentially contaminated sites. Given this controversy, it seems even less likely that New Zealand will take a high-profile stand on MB limits at the meeting.

15. (SBU) The GoNZ's posture at the Prague meeting November 22-26 will likely be one of monitoring approaches taken by other countries rather than a pro-active stance on the issue. However, the GoNZ may be sympathetic to USG rationale concerning technical and economic considerations because of their concern that the Montreal Protocol's restrictions may at some point be extended to official quarantine usage, which would particularly effect NZ's exports to the EU. We believe New Zealand is therefore unlikely to criticize the U.S. position at the meeting, even if it is equally likely not to publicly support us. End Comment.
Swindells